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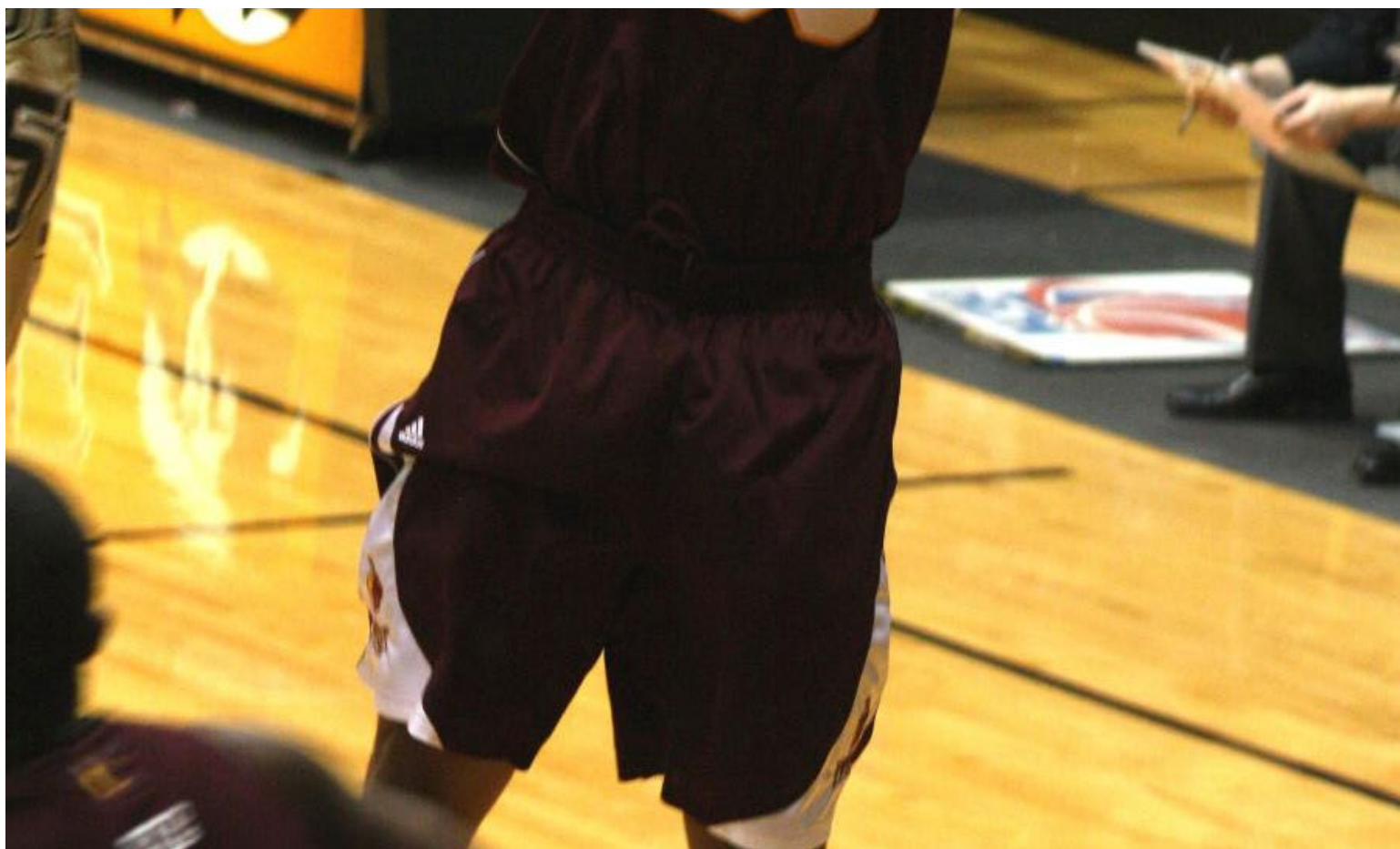
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Pirates Throw Scare In No. 1 Jaguars, Fall 83-80 In PBC Tourney





Posted: Mar 03, 2010

AUGUSTA, Ga. - Senior **Keron McKenzie** hit 10-of-15 three-pointers for a career-high 34 points, but the Armstrong Atlantic State men's basketball squad came up short in its upset bid of top-ranked Augusta State on Wednesday evening, falling 83-80 to the Jaguars in the first round of the 2010 Peach Belt Conference Tournament at the Christenberry Fieldhouse in Augusta.

The Pirates (12-16) were just the second team all year to score 80+ points against Augusta State (26-2) and the first to do so on the Jaguars' home floor. AASU came out on fire from the floor and stayed hot throughout the game.

AASU took a 41-39 lead into halftime on a McKenzie three-pointer with 29 seconds until intermission, then after relinquishing that lead in the opening moments of the second half, went back out front on a layup by McKenzie with 15:17 left in the second half, 50-49. A David Pruett three-pointer built the largest lead of the game for the Pirates, 60-54, with 11:43 remaining.

After a timeout called by the Pirates, Augusta State immediately went on a 11-0 run over the next three minutes, building a 65-60 lead with 8:34 remaining. The Pirates responded with 15-5 run over the next four minutes, capped by another McKenzie three to put AASU up, 75-70, with 4:22 left.

ASU chipped away again at the lead, finally tying things up on a pair of Ben Madgen free throws with 1:53 left. The Jaguars would then make five of six free throws over the next minute and a half to build a five-point lead with 12 seconds left.

McKenzie's final three-pointer of the night - a heave from nearly 30 feet - cut the lead to two, 82-80, with eight seconds left. Alex Smith made one of two free throws and AASU's last chance gasp, a running three from Gabriel Robinson, hit the front of the rim and bounced away, allowing the Jaguars to escape with the victory.

The Pirates made a season-high 13 three-pointers and shot 53.7 percent overall from the floor, while Augusta State shot 52.8 percent from the floor. The Jaguars dominated on the glass, outrebounding the Pirates 35-22, while enjoying a 23-9

edge in free throws made.

McKenzie's 34 points eclipses his career high of 27, set on Nov. 17 at St. Augustine's, and his 34 points are the most for an AASU player since Jock Page recorded 37 points at USC Upstate on Feb. 5, 1994. The 10 three-pointers made are the most for an AASU player in a single game this decade as well as a PBC Tournament record for most threes in a contest.

Shokpeka added 20 points as well for the Pirates, while the Jaguars placed five players in double figures, led by Ben Madgen's 19 points and 17 points apiece from Alex Smith and Fred Brathwaite.

Head coach Jeremy Luther's squad loses four seniors from this season's team - McKenzie, Shokpeka, Robinson and Marquise Duvall.



ARMSTRONG STATE UNIVERSITY

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